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**Testimony of the City of New Haven Chief Administrator's Office
Before the Planning & Development Committee**

Regarding
**HB 06391 An Act Increasing Penalties for the Violation of Municipal
Ordinances**

Submitted by
Rebecca Bombero, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, City of New Haven
February 17, 2023

Senator Rahman, Representative DeGraw and members of the Committee,

I am pleased to testify on in support of HB 06391 An Act Increasing Penalties for the Violation of Municipal Ordinances.

These penalties are set for numerous municipal violations that address key quality of life issues. This includes everything from noise violations, to illegal street cuts, to failure to obtain a necessary permit. The state establishes a ceiling for these fines, currently set at \$250. This ceiling allows the municipality to match the fine to the offence to ensure that the fine helps to discourage the behavior. As you know municipalities can establish fees to cover the cost of delivering some services. Due to rising costs, sometimes these fees could be in excess of the current maximum allowed for fines, and thereby the fines no longer are enough to ensure compliance. In addition, with the standard of observation for violation of other penalties, and the necessary documentation, warnings and processing these fines often to don't allow for the municipality to effectively recover the cost of enforcement staff.

While last updated in 2006 to \$250, this maximum was once \$100 and from legislative history this level seems to have been established around 1959. If that ceiling had kept pace with inflation at this time it would be more in line with \$1,000 which we have seen this legislature establish as a ceiling for several other municipal nuisance violations over the past years such as the illegal use of ATVs. A ceiling of \$1,000 would allow a graduated penalty that would start at \$100 or \$250 for a first offence and allow for a more stiff penalty for subsequent offences helping to modify behavior.

We appreciate this body's consideration of this matter.